

MESSAGE NOTES: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

"Oh, that I had in the desert a lodging place for travelers, so that I might leave my people and go away from them; for they are all adulterers, a crowd of unfaithful people." (Jeremiah 9:2)

"Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart." (2 Corinthians 4:1)

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16)

2 Reasons tempted to lose heart

1. Unbelief (v.1-6)

"Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:1-6)

2. Hardship (v.7-15)

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. ¹³ It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:7-15)

3 Reasons Not to Lose Heart (v.16-18)

1. Our troubles are light
2. Our troubles are temporary
3. Our troubles are working eternal glory

STUDY GUIDE:

STEP ONE: Icebreaker (Optional):

- Today our focus will be on "Renewal" - so what is one thing in your life right now that you wish could get "renewed"?

STEP TWO: Prayer & Scripture reading

- Ask someone in your group to pray to open your time together.
- Ask another person to read **2 Corinthians 4:1-18**.

STEP THREE: Discuss Questions

1. What was challenging, encouraging, confusing, or stood out most to you from this past weekend's teaching?
2. When was the last time you thanked God for his kindness to you in setting up your life the way it is just now? Is this easy or hard for you to do?
3. Look again at verses 1-6. What are some practical ways people can "lose heart"? What in these verses offers us a chance to be renewed?
4. If you had to explain verses 8-9 in your own words, how would you describe what they mean and what makes this even possible?
5. In what ways do our suffering, hardships, and temporary troubles we face as disciples provide platforms for the display of God's power in our lives?
6. Look at verse 10. What do you think it means for us to "carry with us the death of Jesus"?
7. Read verses 13-15 again. What is it that believers "benefit" from based on these verses? What are some examples of what this benefit looks like in your life?
8. Referring to verses 16-18, what would you say are some of the most important things Christians should fix our eyes on about God - even if we cannot always see these things - so that we do not lose heart?

STEP FOUR: Prayer

- Ask someone in your group to close in Prayer